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University of Rochester

# Guide for Returning to University Workspaces

## For Non–Medical Center Employees

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# Returning to University Workspaces

The University of Rochester is committed to providing students, faculty, and staff with a safe and healthy working and teaching environment. This document provides guidance and resources for non–Medical Center staff and faculty who are returning to work on any campus or University facility, excluding the Medical Center and its related facilities. URM Staff and faculty returning to clinical spaces, labs, classrooms, and administrative spaces can find the latest information and guidelines in the online portal: [urmc.edu/redesigned](https://urmc.edu/redesigned).

We all share responsibility for the health and safety of our University community members. Non–Medical Center employees are expected to fully comply with the protocols and guidelines outlined in this document. The University’s plans for operations will continue to be guided by New York State’s Recovery Phases (<https://forward.ny.gov>).

It is possible that a spike in COVID cases may cause the state to pivot once again to physically distant operations for K-12 schools, nursing homes, daycare and elderly care facilities, and many parts of the University. To address this, the University’s Committee on Family Friendly Practice and the Genesee Staff Council, in concert with the Department of Human Resources, have developed flexibility considerations for managers and employees ([rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/university-statement-about-workplace-flexibility/](https://rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/university-statement-about-workplace-flexibility/)). Managers are strongly encouraged to keep these in mind when a flexible approach to work is possible.

## Current Status of Remote Work

The University continues to require that those employees who can accomplish their jobs while working remotely continue to do so unless approved for return to workspaces by their manager or supervisor and with approval from a Cabinet-level leader and school operations director. Remote work helps to keep our workspaces de-densified and lowers the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission. Essential staff in areas including teaching, public safety, facilities, dining services, residential life, research facilities, or those who are responsible for continuing operations at the University may be working on campus or University workspaces.

We continue to follow the New York State guidelines for reopening ([forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries](https://forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries)). Employees may not report to their offices or workspaces without first receiving permission to do so as indicated above, and developing a plan with their supervisors and operations teams in order to ensure that their building is accessible and appropriate physical distancing rules are in place and can be maintained. Additionally, if there are impediments to employees continuing their remote working arrangement, they should contact their supervisor and/or HR Business Partner ([rochester.edu/working/hr/contact/contact\\_list.html](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/contact/contact_list.html)).

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# Health and Safety

## What Is “Exposure” To COVID-19?

According to the Monroe County Health Department, exposure to COVID-19 occurs when an unprotected person (not wearing a face mask or face covering) who does not have COVID-19 is exposed to someone known to have COVID-19 (who is also not wearing a face mask or face covering) for more than 15 consecutive minutes and within a distance of six feet or less. Understanding how exposure to COVID-19 happens helps us understand why it is so important to follow three key health principles: masking/face coverings, physical distancing (staying more than six feet apart), and hand hygiene. See page 5 for University guidelines and expectations.

## How Is the University Monitoring COVID-19 Symptoms?

Faculty, staff, and students are required to complete the Dr. Chat Bot symptom screening tool every day prior to arriving on any University campus. Daily email reminders are sent to encourage members of the University community to make use of this tool. For the health of all University community members, everyone must act responsibly and honestly when filling out Dr. Chat Bot.

- Dr. Chat Bot for non–Medical Center campuses and workspaces  
[healthlab.urmc.rochester.edu/UniversityHealthScreen](https://healthlab.urmc.rochester.edu/UniversityHealthScreen)
- Dr. Chat Bot for URMC employees  
[healthlab.urmc.rochester.edu/EmployeeHealthScreen](https://healthlab.urmc.rochester.edu/EmployeeHealthScreen)
- Dr. Chat Bot is also available on the UR Mobile app.

## How Is the University Conducting COVID-19 Testing?

There are specific COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements that many undergraduate and graduate students will need to fulfill before beginning their in-person academic programs and—in the case of residential Arts, Sciences & Engineering (AS&E) and Eastman School of Music (ESM) undergraduates—before they can move into their on-campus living spaces. All of these requirements and options for the Spring 2021 term are detailed on the University’s COVID-19 Resource Center ([rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/plan-for-spring-semester-student-arrivals](https://rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/plan-for-spring-semester-student-arrivals)).

Additionally, to help identify any emerging outbreaks, the University plans to administer up to 2,000 rapid tests per week for undergraduate and graduate students living on and off campus. This is being done out of an abundance of caution.

### **If an employee tests positive for COVID-19**

All non–Medical Center employees should contact University Health Service at (585) 275-2662 about a positive test. Medical Center employees should contact Employee Health at (585) 275-6065. A phone interview will follow all reports to determine with whom an employee was in contact in order for health officials to proceed with contact tracing.

- Faculty, staff, and postdocs who test positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate at home.
- Employees must get clearance from University Health Service or Employee Health before returning to work if they received a positive COVID-19 test result; they are waiting for a COVID-19 test result; they were told by their PCP that they may have COVID-19 based on their symptoms, even if not tested; or they share a residence with an individual who has been told by their PCP that they have or may have COVID-19 either by testing or symptoms alone.
- Under quarantine and isolation, employees are covered under the COVID addendum to Policy 324: Reassignment/Absence to Prevent Contagion ([rochester.edu/working/hr/policies/pdfpolicies/324.pdf](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/policies/pdfpolicies/324.pdf)). If they remain out of work with COVID-19 longer than 14 days, they will be covered under Sick Leave and Short-Term Disability ([rochester.edu/working/hr/leave/STD\\_plan\\_glance.pdf](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/leave/STD_plan_glance.pdf)) and Family Medical Leave ([rochester.edu/working/hr/policies/pdfpolicies/358.pdf](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/policies/pdfpolicies/358.pdf)) or Worker’s Compensation ([rochester.edu/working/hr/leave/WC\\_Policy.pdf](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/leave/WC_Policy.pdf)) if they were exposed while working.

### **If an employee learns that a colleague or someone that they work closely with at the University is being tested for COVID-19**

- If an employee has spent more than 15 consecutive minutes in close contact (within six feet) with an individual being tested, they can call UHS at (585) 275-2662 for further guidance. If not, they shouldn’t need to be concerned about contracting COVID-19 from them.
- Stay calm and wait for the results of the individual’s COVID-19 test to come back.
- The person being tested will isolate. The department head or an administrator will contact University Facilities at (585) 273-4567 to arrange proper cleaning and sanitization of the office or space where the individual being tested is based. University Facilities is prepared for these requests and is equipped to perform these types of cleanings.

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# Guidance and Expectations

## COVID-19 Safety Training

All non–Medical Center faculty, staff, and students must complete mandatory COVID-19 Safety Training prior to returning to campus and University facilities. This training is available online in MyPath ([mypath.rochester.edu](https://mypath.rochester.edu)) for faculty and staff. Individuals who fail to complete it will be restricted from campus and University facilities.

## Wearing Face Masks/Face Coverings

One cloth face mask with the University logo on it was provided to every non–Medical Center staff member through their department. These masks were distributed to each department’s administrative manager for internal distribution. It is also permissible to wear a personal face mask/face covering. In addition to face masks, face coverings, such as gaiters, are acceptable to wear, provided that they are worn “hands free” (without having to hold it over one’s mouth and nose). Clear plastic face shields can supplement face masks and coverings but alone are not an adequate replacement for a face mask. The University is not providing face shields, except in clinical and some research environments.

Indoors, face masks/face coverings must be worn any time there is more than one person in a given space—including times of brief interaction. Employees should wear a face mask or covering at all times while in a shared workspace or room and use only their own computer, phone, headset, and other equipment.

Exceptions to wearing a face mask/face covering include employees working alone in their own office and when eating or drinking.

If an employee encounters someone at work who isn’t regularly wearing a face mask or covering as required, the recommended response is to politely notify them that a face mask/face covering is required and, if things don’t change, notify their supervisor.

When outdoors, face masks or coverings must be worn when six feet of separation is not feasible. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that everyone carry a face mask/face covering with them at all times.

In the event an employee is unable to wear a face mask/face covering at work, due to health conditions or other concerns, the Office of Disability Resources ([rochester.edu/college/disability](https://rochester.edu/college/disability)) is available to discuss possible accommodations.

## Physical Distancing

It is critical that all employees maintain physical distancing and wear a face mask or covering when they are within six feet of another person, even outside on sidewalks/walkways, campus quads, parking lots, and shuttle stops. Pay close attention to the University signs inside buildings that indicate the proper amount of physical distancing required. Some buildings may have restrictions on how to enter or exit as a way to encourage physical distancing.

Office environments need to maintain at least six feet of distance between colleagues, and private offices should have no more than one person in them at a time, unless the required six feet or greater distancing can be maintained.

## Handwashing

To prevent COVID-19 infection, hand hygiene is critical. Employees must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer (70 percent or greater alcohol content) frequently, and

- before touching their face, or before and after putting on, taking off, or adjusting their face mask or face covering
- before food preparation or eating
- after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose
- after touching high-touch surfaces
- after using the restroom

When soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer. Fully cover all surfaces of the hands with sanitizer and rub them together until they feel dry. The University has installed numerous hand sanitizing stations in buildings.

Gloves are not required to be worn and should not be used to take the place of good hand hygiene.

## Surface Disinfection

Environmental Services/Housekeeping will clean high-touch surfaces in common areas, such as designated eating areas and hallways, but it is also the responsibility of each individual to clean these areas, including tables for eating, before use.

Workstations should also be disinfected before use. This includes a private workspace or any shared-space location or equipment, such as computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, copiers, desks and tables, chair arms, light switches, doorknobs, handles, etc. Disinfecting wipes will be readily available.

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# Additional Workplace Guidance

## Meetings and Gatherings

In most cases, meetings should be conducted remotely, by video conference or phone. If people are working onsite, a small group meeting as permitted by New York State is permissible if all participants are wearing face masks or face coverings and can safely stay six feet apart. Signage at the entrances to conference and meeting rooms has been installed to indicate maximum capacity. Gathering in larger groups is not permitted. At this time, no food or drink service will be provided by the University at meetings and gatherings without prior approval from a Cabinet-level leader.

## Shuttle Transportation

To ensure the safety and well-being of University community members, Transportation and Parking has implemented the following changes and safety measures for riding the shuttles.

- The University's shuttles will run at 50 percent seated capacity and will not allow standing riders.
- Passengers and drivers are required to wear face masks or face coverings.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located at each bus at entrances/exits.
- Shuttles will be wiped down after each route and deep cleaned overnight.
- Popular shuttle stops will have highly visible signage to indicate physical distancing and face-covering requirements for passengers getting on the bus.

## Parking

Faculty, staff, and postdocs with parking permits should park in their designated zones. If a campus parking permit is needed, contact Parking Services at (585) 275-4524 or visit [rochester.edu/parking](https://www.rochester.edu/parking).

## Restrooms

Maintaining physical distancing may be difficult in smaller restrooms but is still necessary. Signs may be posted in restrooms with occupancy limits and instructions to maintain physical distancing.

## Elevators

Elevator occupancy should be limited to two to three people—and no more than four. Everyone is encouraged to use the stairs whenever possible. Anyone taking an elevator should wear a face mask or face covering and use hand sanitizer after touching buttons and other surfaces.

## Meals

When eating in their work environment (break room, office, etc.), employees must maintain six feet of distance between themselves and others and should not sit facing one another. Eating alone is encouraged. Observe occupancy limits and avoid crowding break rooms. Face masks and face coverings may be removed only in order to eat or drink, but then must be put back on. Everyone must wipe down the tables and chairs they use once they are done. Shared appliances such as refrigerators and coffee makers can be used but must be disinfected after each use (wiping down handles and surfaces). Reusable kitchenware (e.g., forks, plates) should not be used and should be replaced with disposable options.

If obtaining food from dining sites on campus, a face mask or face covering must be worn when picking up food. Observe occupancy limits and directional patterns.

## Laboratory Work

Research activities may vary between departments/divisions. If faculty or staff members have questions, they may contact the department or division leadership for more information.

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# Travel and Quarantines

## Personal Travel

For domestic personal travel in the US, employees must stay informed of any quarantine requirements or travel restrictions issued by New York State ([coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory)). The CDC still advises that the best way to prevent contracting the illness is to avoid being exposed to it. Because travel increases the chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, staying home is the best way to protect oneself and others from getting sick.

International personal travel remains very restricted. The CDC recommends against all non-essential international travel. Foreign nationals may be denied entry into the US from many countries, and additional travel restrictions into the US may be in place.

## University-Related Travel

University-related travel is that which is undertaken for purposes of institutional business/work, research, or study. Currently, University-related travel, both internationally and domestically (greater than 100 miles from University campuses), is restricted. This decision is a measure of fiscal responsibility during the University's recovery process and aligns with ongoing illness prevention efforts. If a non-URMC faculty or staff member presents an absolute need for University-related domestic or international travel that requires institutional funding, they must first speak with their managers or department heads. The request may then be approved only

after a risk consultation and approval by a Cabinet-level officer. To submit a request for an essential travel risk consultation, log into Workday (NetID required), search “Spend Authorization,” and complete the application.

As a reminder, all planned international University-related travel should be registered with the Office for Global Engagement through the Travel Registry ([rochester.edu/global/travel/faculty-and-staff-travel](https://rochester.edu/global/travel/faculty-and-staff-travel)).

For all approved essential travel—regardless of destination or origin— the University requires individuals to follow the current New York State testing and quarantine requirements, found at [coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory).

## Visitors to Campuses and University Facilities

With the exception of University medical and clinical care facilities, the University continues to be closed to outside guests or visitors until further notice. The University has established requirements that all service providers, including contractors and delivery personnel, coming to non-Medical Center campuses and facilities must follow. These include a COVID-19 daily health screening, wearing face masks or face coverings, maintaining physical distancing of at least six feet, cleaning protocols, and other prerequisites. Details are available online ([urmc.rochester.edu/purchasing/supplier](https://urmc.rochester.edu/purchasing/supplier)). Information for service providers going to the Medical Center may be found on the Facilities website ([facilities.rochester.edu/support\\_ops/document/URMC\\_Requirements\\_for\\_Service\\_Providers\\_during\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://facilities.rochester.edu/support_ops/document/URMC_Requirements_for_Service_Providers_during_COVID-19.pdf)).

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# Workplace Accommodations

## Accommodations for Employees at High-Risk for COVID-19

Faculty and staff members who are over the age of 65, or who have underlying medical conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19, may request an accommodation from the University.

Faculty accommodations may include teaching remotely from a separate location on campus; changing class sizes, locations, or schedules; varying the teaching modality; or teaching from home. Staff accommodations may include changes to workspace or schedules or remote work options.

Faculty and staff who wish to request an accommodation based on these criteria should complete the University’s Employee Request for Medical Accommodations ([rochester.edu/eoc/assets/pdf/reqtdisacempl.pdf](https://rochester.edu/eoc/assets/pdf/reqtdisacempl.pdf)) and submit the form to either their HR Business Partner ([rochester.edu/working/hr/contact/contact\\_list.html](https://rochester.edu/working/hr/contact/contact_list.html)) or the Office of Disability Resources ([rochester.edu/college/disability](https://rochester.edu/college/disability)).

Faculty and staff members should also discuss their requested accommodations with their chair, director, or supervisor, but specific medical information should never be shared with the chair, director, or department.

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# Staffing

To meet the requirements of each New York State Recovery Phase and continue to conduct mission-related activities (on-campus instruction, on-site research, student residential services), each department and division has developed staffing strategies that include a continuation of remote work, alternating work schedules, and other options to resume previously curtailed activities. **Staff will be notified by their supervisors when to return to workspaces and should not return until authorized.**

Managers who would like to submit a proposal to have all or some of their department or team work remotely will be asked to define the business objective of their unit, including what work needs to occur, by whom, and where will the work be performed. The plan must be designed to meet these objectives while balancing the wellbeing and safety of staff, faculty, and students. Every effort will be made to create a flexible staffing plan that balances the department's needs and employee work-life balance. Once approved by the divisional leader, managers will be expected to communicate with their team the new staffing plan, how each employee will be impacted, and what resources are available.

## Individual Requests for Remote Work Accommodation

Individuals who wish to work remotely must engage in a similar review process as outlined above but at a more local level with their supervisor or manager and Human Resources. Consideration and approval will be made by the department or service line leader.

Managers are strongly encouraged to keep the Committee on Family Friendly Practice flexibility considerations for managers and employees ([rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/university-statement-about-workplace-flexibility/](https://rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/university-statement-about-workplace-flexibility/)) in mind when a flexible approach to work is possible.

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# Personal Protective Equipment

The University has centralized ordering and distribution of COVID-related personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning materials for non-hospital units. Departments needing PPE supplies can order them through a form on the University Facilities and Services website ([facilities.rochester.edu/\\_forms/covid\\_supply](https://facilities.rochester.edu/_forms/covid_supply)).

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# Additional Staff Resources

As COVID-19 has become a global health concern, it understandably has created a lot of stress and anxiety among our faculty and staff. The University has resources and services ready to assist individuals in coping with the stress caused by the current climate:

- **Behavioral Health Partners (BHP)**

*Open to University faculty and staff enrolled in a University Health Care Plan.*

Offering support for mental health concerns including anxiety, stress, and depression.

(585) 276-6900

[urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners](http://urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners)

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

*Open to University faculty and staff and their household members.*

A confidential service providing the opportunity to discuss personal or work-related problems.

Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

(585) 276-9110

[urmc.rochester.edu/eap](http://urmc.rochester.edu/eap)

- **University Faith Communities at the Interfaith Chapel**

*Open to University faculty, staff, and students.*

Located on River Campus.

(585) 275-4321

[rochester.edu/chapel/faith-communities/index](http://rochester.edu/chapel/faith-communities/index)

